

GUIDELINES FOR DEMOLITION

INTRODUCTION

Like many urban areas across America, Chatham-Arch & Massachusetts Avenue suffered a decline in the postwar years, and many historic buildings sat deteriorating or vacant for decades. Regrettably, some houses and commercial buildings were demolished to make way for surface parking lots, new modern buildings, and urban renewal opportunities. These factors make each surviving historic building all the more valuable. Although both Chatham-Arch and Massachusetts Avenue have experienced a rebirth and are once again thriving urban areas, further demolition would only create irreparable gaps in the historic fabric of the streetscape and would mar the character of the area. Therefore, the demolition of any existing historic building or structure can be justified only in extreme cases.

The following guidelines are not restricted to entire structures but also apply to components and additions to buildings which may also have historic value (such as an early 20th century Neoclassical porch added to an Italianate house). If such demolition occurs without careful research and forethought, it could have a negative impact on the architectural integrity of the building and diminish the character of the street.

The following section explains the type of work considered in this plan to be demolition as well as the criteria to be used when reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness that include demolition. Before receiving any permits or undertaking any work that constitutes demolition, a Certificate of Appropriateness or Authorization from the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission must be issued.

DEMOLITION DEFINITION

For the purpose of this plan, demolition shall be defined as the razing, wrecking or removal by any means of the entire or partial exterior of a structure. The following examples are meant to help define demolition and are not all-inclusive:

1. The razing, wrecking or removal of a total structure.
2. The razing, wrecking or removal of a part of a structure, resulting in a reduction in its mass, height or volume.
3. The razing, wrecking or removal of an enclosed or open addition.

Some work that may otherwise be considered demolition may be considered rehabilitation, if done in conjunction with an IHPC Certificate of Appropriateness for rehabilitation. Examples include:

1. The removal or destruction of exterior siding and face material, exterior surface trim, and portions of exterior walls.

2. The removal or destruction of those elements that provide enclosure at openings in any exterior wall (e.g., window units, doors, panels).
3. The removal or destruction of architectural, decorative or structural features and elements that are attached to the exterior of a structure (e.g., parapets, cornices, brackets, chimneys).

Some work may be considered rehabilitation, not demolition, and may be categorized under other guidelines in the plan. This work typically requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. Examples include:

1. Any work on the interior of the structure.
2. The removal of exterior utility and mechanical equipment.
3. The removal, when not structurally integrated with the main structure, of awnings, gutters, downspouts, light fixtures, open fire escapes and other attachments.
4. The removal of signs.
5. The removal of paint.
6. The removal of site improvement features such as fencing, sidewalks, streets, driveways, curbs, alleys, landscaping, and asphalt.
7. The replacement of clear glass with no historic markings.

CRITERIA FOR DEMOLITION

The IHPC shall approve a Certificate of Appropriateness or Authorization for demolition as defined in this chapter only if it finds one or more of the following:

1. The structure poses an immediate and substantial threat to the public safety.
2. The historic or architectural significance of the structure or part thereof is such that, in the Commission's opinion, it does not contribute to the historic character of the structure and the district, or the context thereof.
3. The demolition is necessary to allow new development which, in the Commission's opinion, is of greater significance to the preservation of the district than its retention of the structure, or portion thereof, for which demolition is sought, and/or
4. The structure or property cannot be put to any reasonable economically beneficial use for which it is or may be reasonably adapted without approval of demolition.

The IHPC may ask interested individuals or organizations for assistance in seeking an alternative to demolition.

When considering a proposal for demolition, the IHPC shall consider the following criteria for demolition as guidelines for determining appropriate action:

Condition

Demolition of an historic building may be justified by condition, but only when the damage or deterioration to the structural system is so extensive that the building presents an immediate and substantial threat to the safety of the public. In certain instances demolition of selective parts of the building may be authorized after proper evaluation by the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission.

Significance

The Commission has the responsibility of determining the significance of a structure and whether it contributes to the district. It shall consider the architectural and historical significance of the structure individually, in relation to the street, and as a part of the district as a whole. These same considerations will be given to parts of the building. The Commission will also consider how the loss of a building, or a portion thereof, will affect the character of the district, the neighboring buildings, and in the case of partial demolition, the building itself. Buildings that are noted in the plan as non-contributing or potentially contributing shall be researched to confirm that there is no obscured architectural or historical significance.

In making its determination of significance, the Commission shall consider the following:

1. Architectural and historical information included in this plan.
2. Information contained in the district's National Register nomination (if one exists).
3. Information contained in any other professionally conducted historic surveys pertaining to this district.
4. The opinion of its professional staff.
5. Evidence presented by the applicant.
6. Evidence presented by recognized experts in architectural history.

Replacement

Demolition of a structure may be justified when, in the opinion of the Commission, the proposed new development with which it will be replaced is of greater significance to the preservation of the district than *retention* of the existing structure. This will only be the case when the structure to be demolished is not of material *significance*, the loss of the structure will

have minimal effect on the historic character of the district, and the new development will be compatible, appropriate and beneficial to the district.

To afford the Commission the ability to consider demolition on the basis of replacement development, the applicant shall submit the following information as required by the Commission or its staff:

1. Elevations and floor plans.
2. A scaled streetscape drawing showing the new development in its context (usually including at least two building on either side).
3. A site plan showing the new development and structure(s) to be demolished.
4. A written description of the new development.
5. A time schedule for construction and evidence that the new construction will occur.
6. Any other information that would assist the Commission in determining the appropriateness of the new development and its value relative to the existing structure(s).

Economics

If requested by the applicant, the Commission shall consider whether the structure or property can be put to any reasonable economically beneficial use for which it is or may be adapted including (for income producing property) whether the applicant can obtain a reasonable economic return from the existing property without the demolition. The owner has the responsibility of presenting clear and convincing evidence to the Commission. The Commission may prepare its own evaluation of the property's value, feasibility for preservation, or other factors pertinent to the case.

To afford the Commission the ability to consider the economic factors of demolition, the applicant shall submit the following information when required by the Commission:

1. Estimate of the cost of the proposed demolition and an estimate of any additional costs that would be incurred to comply with recommendations of the Commission for changes necessary for the issue of a Certificate of Appropriateness.
2. A report from a licensed engineer or architect with experience in rehabilitation as to the structural soundness of the structure and its suitability for rehabilitation.
3. Estimated market value of the property both in its current condition, and after completion of the proposed demolition to be presented through an appraisal by a qualified professional appraiser.

4. An estimate from an architect, developer, real estate consultant, appraiser, or other real estate professional experienced in rehabilitation as to the economic feasibility of rehabilitation or reuse of the existing structure.
5. For property acquired within twelve years of the date an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness is filed: amount paid for the property, the date of acquisition, and the party from whom acquired, including a description of the relationship, if any, between the owner of record or applicant and the person from whom the property was acquired, and any terms of financing between the seller and buyer.
6. If the property is income-producing, the annual gross income from the property for the previous two years; and depreciation deduction and annual cash flow before and after debt service, if any, during the same period.
7. Remaining balance on any mortgage or other financing secured by the property and annual debt service, if any, for the previous two years.
8. All appraisals obtained within the previous two years by the owner or applicant in connection with the purchase, financing or ownership of the property.
9. Any listing of the property for sale or rent, price asked and offers received, if any, within the previous two years.
10. Copy of the most recent real estate tax bill.
11. Form of ownership or operation of the property, whether sole proprietorship, for profit or non-for-profit corporation, limited partnership, joint venture, or other method.
12. Any other information that would assist the Commission in making a determination as to whether the property does yield or may yield a reasonable return to the owners, e.g. proforma financial analysis.